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a spiritual review for sisters

SPONSA REGIS

is a spiritual review for all Sisterhoods, published monthly, with ecclesiastical approval, by monks of St. John's Abbey, at Collegeville, Minnesota.

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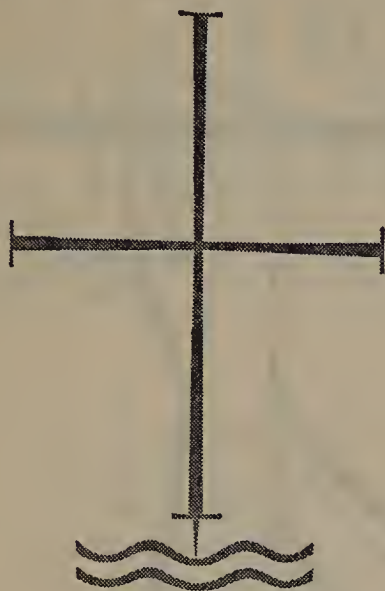
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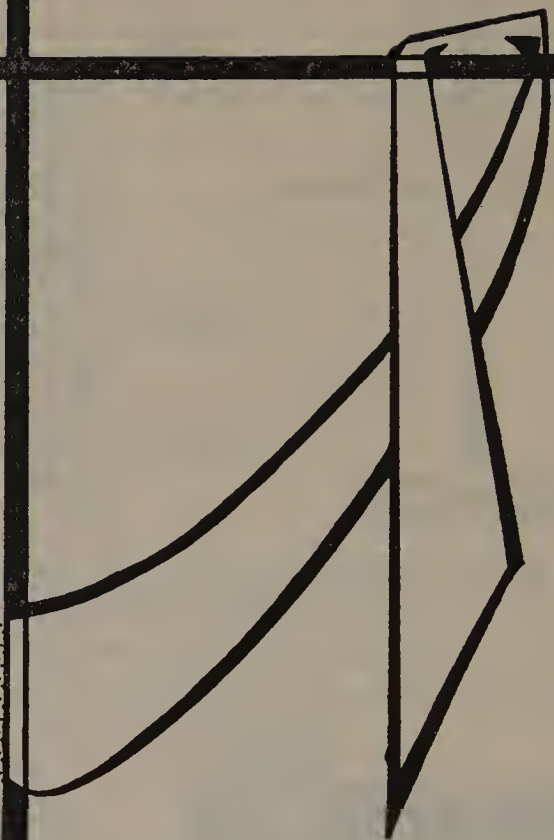
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SPONSA REGIS

April 1956 Vol. 27, No. 8

A BLESSED AND JOYFUL EASTER TO ALL THE READERS OF SPONSA REGIS! MAY THE HARD-WON VICTORY OF JESUS PLANT THE TRIUMPHANT CROSS INTO ALL YOUR CONVENTS, SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, AND FIELDS OF WORK AND BATTLE AND SUFFERING. — The editor

Absence and Presence

TO THE CREDIT of contemporary thinkers it must be said that they are showing a laudable interest in the ultimate vocation of the human spirit. They are fascinated by the depths of human nature and they are making praiseworthy efforts at a truly reflective investigation. If much of what they put forward is at best tentative and exploratory, they have brought to the investigation a genius for descriptive analysis which even a follower of Saint Thomas of Aquin might envy them.

In these realms of the human spirit Saint Thomas walked with such security of step, his philosophic genius for explanation was so highly developed, that he stands out in contrast to others who seem to loiter on the way and concentrate upon details of the journey over which the Saint did not delay. What the contemporary thinker gains in his vision of detail he loses in comprehensiveness of explanation; but what Saint Thomas misses in cursory descriptions is more than made up for by his penetration to essentials. That is why his discovery of ultimate prin-

ciples, which are unchanging and timeless in their truth, is prophetic in its significance.

It is sometimes imagined that to cope with the contemporary situation a radical change of outlook is needed. Contemporary thinkers are stressing subjectivity. This subjectivity is not to be interpreted in any pejorative sense. What they wish to convey is that it is only by the presence of the human subject to himself in the maturity of reflection that he can achieve a true objectivity and appreciate that "I" and "thou" relationship which is characteristic of human love at its highest. But that is precisely what Saint Thomas was saying all his life, if only men would take the trouble to assimilate his thought—and what he says about the mystery of love has yet to be equalled.

No man could hope to enter intellectually into the secret of love who had not loved, as Saint Thomas did, and the union in him of sanctity and science is the surest guarantee of the authenticity of his vision.

This is not to say that we have nothing to learn from men like Max Scheler or Gabriel Marcel, or indeed from many another, by way of descriptive analysis. But it does mean that even this descriptive analysis of the greatest mystery in existence can be fully appreciated only in the light of ultimate principles. Love is the mystery at once of a presence and an absence; this is the law by which the rhythm of its movement is ultimately governed; and it is no exaggeration to say that the presence of love is a kind of absence, just as the absence which it creates can prove to be a kind of presence.

There is no other way of making a first, perhaps indeed a startled, approach to the mystery of human love, and to that highest form of it on earth which is divine charity. Saint Francis de Sales once said that the perfection of man is to be found in love and the perfection of love is to be found in charity. But we do know that charity is not of the earth and that the place of its birth is heaven. It is natural then that the mystery of love should command the language of paradox.

Paradox is the instrument of all reflective minds. Our blessed Lord delighted in it. He knew that paradox only conceals the truth in order to reveal it. He was Himself a living Paradox, uniting in His Person the human and the divine, and it was not

by accident that He had recourse to paradox and parable to reveal His mind. Now the paradox of love is presence and absence; and that is going to be our theme. But just to show that we have not invented this, let us quote one of the greatest of the Master's paradoxes. It is this: "For he that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound: but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath" (Matt. 13:12). That is not a text to be read as you run: it arrests the course of thought and compels consideration.

It is evident that our blessed Lord is talking about the conditions necessary for the reception of something. The context, besides, bears this out. Saint Paul catches an echo of it when he asks: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" (1 Cor. 4:7). Men have received even their existence, not to speak of grace, and their existence itself is a gift of love. But they have also received freedom; and freedom is given to them that they might be in a position to accept. But if they desire to receive other things, they must first desire them, since God will not force Himself upon them. Unless a thing is first desired, and therefore present in desire, it cannot be attained in a human way. The man who wants knowledge, for instance, must begin by desiring it; and sacred Scripture assures him that desire for wisdom shall be honoured by God. "Therefore", it is said, "the desire of wisdom bringeth to the everlasting kingdom" (Wis. 6:21).

"Ask," said our blessed Lord, "and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find..." (Matt. 6:7). "But if any of you," said Saint James, "want wisdom, let him ask God, who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). The vital thing, though, is to *want* wisdom, and there are so few who really do. The paradox of our blessed Lord is beginning to reveal itself: for to him that hath wisdom in desire, to him shall be given, and he shall abound. But is desire the last word? It is not. The reason is that desire is born of love, springs in fact from love, and men desire because they love. But the love which our blessed Lord had in mind on this occasion was the love of charity: He came on earth that men might be rooted and grounded in this new thing which is charity (Eph. 3:17). Now, charity is a new Presence, as Saint John

so well says in the oft-repeated text, *Deus caritas est, et qui manet in caritate, in Deo manet*. But if God abides in charity, there is in the love of charity a Presence.

The truth is that love, at every level, is a mysterious presence which awakens desire; and it is in desire that love becomes conscious of an absence. The rhythm of presence and absence is one of the deep things in the spiritual life. (*To be continued*)

FATHER JAMES, O.F.M. Cap.
Cork, Ireland.

Good Friday

BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDEN

THE PERSON WHO IS STRIVING for perfection may fall victim to the paradox of perfection. Perfection presents the problem of harmonizing things that are in apparent contradiction. Dietrich von Hildebrand labels them *coincidentia oppositorum*, which might be translated "the marriage of opposites". Since perfection has to do, in part, with the harmonization of things that stand at opposite poles, the person striving after perfection must have the largeness of mind and heart that will enable her to keep both poles within reach. If she loses grasp upon one of the opposites, she will be a spiritual cripple, hobbling along her way to God. Such a cripple may still love in a narrow sort of way. She may still attain her God. But she will not attain that high perfection to which she was called. Others will run the way of perfection because they are able to embrace both poles of possibility, and are made strong by the very extent of that embrace.

Take the problem of the sinless and the sinner. Now to say that those striving for perfection try to lead sinless lives is to repeat the obvious. But there is danger in even so holy and necessary a thing as the avoidance of sin. It might lead a sincere soul into a forgetfulness which is oblivious of the burden of sin which the mass of men bear. As the Pharisees found out, zeal for perfection can lead to a secret contempt which despises

not the sin, but the sinner. Perfection is thought of as so personal a thing that it is unrelated to the spiritual welfare of others. It is a type of rugged individualism in the spiritual life. Each man for himself, and the sluggard has to bear alone the burden of his indolence. Ultimately the problem of the sinless and the sinner reduces itself to one member of the Mystical Body attempting to attain perfection while being unconcerned that many members of that same Body are diseased and dying.

Perhaps it would be consoling, were the Church made up of a closed society, the elect, the spiritually elite. Certainly scandal would be much reduced, if membership in the Church were limited to those, let us say, who are in the state of grace. There would be a certain satisfaction in belonging to Christ's chosen few, a satisfaction which could even be an incentive to greater perfection. Here sinlessness, at least as regards mortal sin, would be taken for granted. Each would be comfortable in her unconcern for others. This might possibly redound to the glory of God, because each soul could devote more time to becoming the likeness of her Groom. This might be all very well, but it would have little in common with the Church Christ founded. Such a Church could not possibly be the Mystical Body of Christ.

How did Christ conceive of His Church in such a way to embrace both the sinless (in this relative sense) and the sinner? A person becomes a member of the Mystical Body through Baptism. The new member of Christ's Body is so much "of the Body" that it cannot act alone. To do so would be against the very nature of a body. A body always acts in the totality of its being. The new member may pray alone in the privacy of her room—in physical remoteness from others—but in the spiritual order we cannot say that she ever prays alone. We all form "one person in Jesus Christ" (Gal. 3:28). The oneness of the soul with Christ and His members is such that we say it constitutes her being in the spiritual order. It would be a violation of her being, of what she is, to attempt a prayer that is totally unrelated to the whole Body of Christ. Mersch says that an isolated prayer is no more presentable than a member torn from the organism; the prayer of a part of the body is only a partial prayer, and it receives its wholeness from the whole Body of Christ.

Those baptized souls who are in the state of grace are the sinless souls, in the relative sense of which we spoke. But besides these, there are members of Christ's Body who are guilty of serious sins. In his encyclical on the Mystical Body Pius XII writes: "Not every sin, however grave and enormous it may be, is such to sever a man automatically" from the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. The question now is: what is the relation of the healthy members to the diseased members, of those in the state of grace to those in the state of mortal sin?

The relation of healthy members to diseased members is analogous to, though not identical with, that of the Head to the Body. Christ is the Savior of His Body. He saved us, the members of His Body, by becoming man, by identifying Himself with us, by dying for us. This meant that He would become identified with sinful mankind, without Himself being a sinner. But so close was this identification that St. Paul dared to say that Christ made Himself "to be sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ is said to be weak, because He took upon Himself our weakness. He made Himself a curse, because He took upon Himself the curse we called down upon ourselves. Christ bore the burden of our sins.

St. Paul wrote: "Bear one another's burden and so you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Christ who is "Pure Perfection", as St. Gregory Nazianzen calls Him, identified Himself with us and with our sins. In the case of Christ it is the Strong bending to the weak and taking the whole burden of their sin and sorrow. In our case it is the weak helping the weaker and of sharing the burden of their sins. The healthy members of Christ's Body must bear part of the burden which weighs upon the diseased members. And this is not something that is left to the generosity of the members of Christ. It is the law of their being, the demand of what they are. "If one member suffers anything, all members suffer with it" (1 Cor. 12:26).

There is no burden so intolerable as the burden of sin. Even reason aided by faith cannot fully know the enormity of creaturely guilt. Faith sees through a glass darkly not only the bright glories of revelation, but also the dark mystery of iniquity, this quiet terror which waits and watches and desires.

Though the mystery of iniquity is more ancient than time, it lies across creation with the vigor of fresh decay. This we cannot ultimately understand. But this much we can know: unaided man is more powerful in evil than in good. Strictly speaking, it is only in the sphere of evil that man's actions can take on a significance that is absolutely his.

There is a suggestion of this mystery in our Lord's words about the men who crucified Him: "They know not what they do." Did they know what they were doing? Were they responsible for their actions and worthy of blame? To both we must answer with an unqualified "Yes". But what they did not know and could not know is the depth of evil in their crime. They could never fathom nor measure the breadth and length and height and depth of guilt in their delight. They could not know the extent of their sin, because its evil is measured only by the infinity of God who is all Love. God's love is not, in the last analysis, definable, to say nothing of its incapacity for measurement. Like Christ's love, the evil of serious sin "surpasses knowledge", because it is measured only by the fullness of God.

We see now the burden that weighs upon the members who are already classed as "weaker", and we understand how great is their need of sharing their burden. We can say that the burden of their guilt is, in a manner of speaking, our guilt, since what belongs to one member, whether for glory or for shame, belongs to the whole Body.

Our obligations to the diseased members of Christ's Mystical Body can never be ignored in our efforts to attain perfection. We are not merely perfected as individuals, and we are not saved merely as individuals. We attain perfection and salvation only as members of Christ's Body. Any attempt to seek perfection in isolation, in forgetfulness of the whole Body of Christ, is to seek an illusion. And if it is true, as Arthur Koestler suggests, that no death is so sad as the death of an illusion, then the death of this particular illusion is heavy with an eternal sadness. This illusion dies only when the soul wakes up to life beyond the last beat of the heart. Then she realizes that, though she is attaining heaven, she has missed the perfection to which she was called. She had forgotten that love is not divisible. To love Christ is to love the weak members of Christ and to share their burden.

What is the prayer life of a soul that is conscious of her membership in the Body of Christ? She may or may not pray the official prayer of the Mystical Body, the Divine Office, but she is guided by its spirit. Her soul is not cramped with self-concern. Of course she is eager to root out pride, sins of the tongue, uncharitableness, spiritual sloth. And she uses all the traditional means to perfect herself: particular examen, general examen, the resolutions with which she concludes her meditation, the corrections of superiors. She is insistent in prayer, asking for those graces which will make her a spotless bride of Christ. Though her prayer life includes these means of perfecting herself, her prayer life transcends them. Her prayer life must be as large as the prayer of the intentions of Christ. Her prayer of petition must be aware of needs other than those of self. Her prayer is "taught of God" in the sacred liturgy, the worship God gave the Church. Her prayer of petition must be concerned also with the great needs of the Church as seen in the bold petitions of the Good Friday liturgy: the peace of the Church, the welfare of the Pope, bishops and priests, petition for the people of God, converts, the sick and hungry and those in prison, for heretics, schismatics and sinners.

Since she knows that she cannot go to God alone, but only as a member of Christ's Mystical Body, she prays for the weak and diseased members. She willingly takes upon herself the burden of other men's sin, this burden no man can bear alone. She is eager to strengthen and perfect the weaker member, eager to bring every member "to perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). In the perfection of the members of Christ's Body is her only hope of personal perfection.

REV. KILLIAN McDONNELL, O.S.B.
St. John's Abbey
Collegeville, Minnesota

Love one another with simplicity, that is, love the soul of your neighbor as a treasure entrusted to you, a treasure which I placed on your path of life in order that MY will may be fulfilled in it.

Abide In Me

MANY CONVENTS IN AMERICA have cut down their annual retreat from eight to six days. No doubt there are wise reasons for this, but one's first reaction, on learning of the change, is regret. Already the demands of the active life are, in many cases, overwhelming. It does seem a pity that inroads have to be made on even the one week in the entire year that is devoted exclusively to the things of the spirit.

An antidote against over-activity should be to ponder prayerfully in the heart, like Mary, on St. John's inexhaustible fifteenth chapter. Here are preserved for us the very words actually spoken by our divine Master, their truth as living and the urgency of their message as pressing for His disciples in the twentieth century as for those first privileged to listen to them.

Keenly conscious though I be of my unworthiness, let me enter the Cenacle in spirit and kneel down at the supper table. On one side our divine Lord is seated; greatly daring I take the place directly opposite, on my knees, my eyes fixed upon Him, my joined hands resting at the edge, my whole attention, at least during this special audience, focussed on what He is saying to me.

Like Martha, I am, it may be, busy about many things. He does not condemn activity, but in the first six verses He keeps insisting on the truth that no amount of external good works can ever be a substitute for the life of prayer and union with Himself. There are religious whose spiritual lives are relegated to the strict discharge of the prayers enjoined by Rule. These finished, they plunge once more into the stream of activity, giving themselves unrestrainedly to work — letters, examinations, tests, interviews, schedules, classes, instructions, journeys — and a whole lot more in an over-crowded program.

Is it enough that prayer occupy merely a negligible fraction in this breathless existence? That it be preserved, like an important letter, in a pigeon-hole in our desk? That we do indeed take it out to look at occasionally, but that its influence on the rest of our day is almost nil? Re-read these first six verses and they leave no sort of doubt about the answer. The branch cannot

bear fruit of itself; it must be vivified by the sap communicated to it by the Vine. Therefore all external work must be soaked, so to say, with the interior spirit. It must be simply the expression of love, the translating of our prayer into the deeds of love. The nun at her prie-dieu, and the nun in the kitchen or classroom or hospital ward, is doing, or should be doing, essentially the same thing. Her work may not be permitted to crush out recollection. Her periods of prayer differ from periods of work only in this, that in prayer divine union is sought with a greater intensity. Specifically they are the same.

Such a soul, says our Lord, "beareth much fruit." It is good for us here to face the question: does the ceaseless activity we often exercise produce a proportionate amount of spiritual good, which is professedly our only concern? Are souls imbued with deeper love of God, filled with the spirit of self-sacrifice, eaten up with zeal for the conversion of the world, as a direct result of the work we do? Is the religion we impart merely simmering, merely lukewarm, when the times we live in call out imperiously for souls who are on fire? And is the reason for this that we ourselves are tepid, preoccupied with the non-spiritual to the detriment of the spiritual, laying the greater emphasis on the less important?

Is Our Lord's promise, stated in verse seven, verified in our case? The soul living the interior life asks whatever it wills, "and it shall be done." Here is divine testimony to the marvellous influence over God exercised by such a soul. Don't we lament the world-wide victory of Christ's enemies today? Aren't we often pained to learn of the apostasy and scandalous lives of students we taught? What is wanting to us, that we do not seem to be able to wrestle with God and call down the graces needed so sorely? This seventh verse is instructive here.

There is space for only two more verses. In verse ten our Lord speaks of the sense of security that brings such immense depths of peace to the soul united with Him. "If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love." "You *shall*..." It is a promise in which we readily detect the echo of His words to St. Margaret Mary. Final perseverance always remains a free gift of God, but the soul that abides in Him, by the faithful practice of the interior life, sees so vividly the vanity of all else

that defection becomes morally impossible. In every storm it clings to Him, knowing that the winds and the waves obey Him.

Closely allied with the peace of such a soul is its unalterable happiness. So many depend for their happiness on the company of friends, on amusements of a more or less frivolous and worldly character, on spectacular success and results that can be measured and tabulated. To the soul that has once tasted the sweetness of intimacy with God all else must ever after remain insipid. "These things I have spoken to you, that MY joy may be in you."

REV. ROBERT NASH, S.J.
Rathfarnham Castle
Dublin, Ireland.

Lay Missionaries

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC AUXILIARIES

ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE expressions of the modern upsurge of the lay apostolate in this country is the young, but remarkably sound and well-organized lay missionary society, the International Catholic Auxiliaries. Now in only the third year of operation, the Chicago Training Center has two American girls on the training staff, with six others taking their training as missionaries and requests for vocation information being received from all over the country. All of this is evidence of the great appeal this type of vocation holds for the American girl. Unlike many lay mission societies, membership in the Auxiliaries is not simply a question of placing one's activity temporarily at the service of the missions, but of a lifetime dedication including the practise of the evangelical counsels by virtue of an oath received, approved and blessed by the Church.

The Auxiliaries were founded in Belgium in 1937 by Yvonne Poncelet under the inspiration of the great apostle of modern China, Father Vincent Lebbe. Long years of missionary activity had convinced Father Lebbe of the need for Catholics, who while remaining *lay*, would give themselves wholly to God for their entire life in order to serve the Church in mission countries.

The members are to be witnesses to Christ among their non-Christian brothers by their direct apostolic activities and by their indirect apostolate in the Christian way in which they exercise their professions as doctor, nurse, social worker, etc., as well as by their everyday lives. In particular, they orient their activities towards the promotion and training of native lay apostles. The Auxiliaries work in the missions in small groups known as "teams".

At the present time the international Society has about 200 members from 17 countries, including nearly every country in western Europe and several Asian countries. At the U.S. Training Center there are girls from Germany, Canada, Japan and Viet-Nam in addition to Americans. Teams of Auxiliaries have been sent to Central Africa, Formosa, Viet-Nam, Jordan, Syria, Korea and Lebanon. Others will soon leave for Japan. In Chicago, London, Brussels and Paris the Auxiliaries conduct centers for foreign students. One of their members, Mariette Dierkens, was shot in 1939 while working as a nurse in Nanking, China. The Papal Internuncio, Archbishop Riberi, called her a "martyr to charity" for her apostolic work among the Chinese.

Although differing in nationality, age, profession and background, girls who join the Auxiliaries have in common three particular desires: the desire to be missionaries, the desire to remain lay and the desire to give themselves completely to God.

MISSIONARIES

The Auxiliaries use the word "mission" in the traditional sense of the apostolate in countries dependent on the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda and of certain countries dependent on the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church. The Society does not undertake work in the home missions, but is solely a foreign mission society.

In the light of the missionary encyclicals and following Father Lebbe the Auxiliaries desire to be assimilated as completely as possible to the people among whom they work. They therefore try to adapt themselves very thoroughly to the language, customs, culture and mentality of the people to whom they are sent. They give themselves not only to an apostolate, but to a people.

"As Christ the Word became incarnate among men, a divine leaven in the human dough, the Auxiliaries must not live in an

Ivory Tower. They must make themselves all things to all men, mixing with all, being part of a single whole with them; Arab among the Arabs, Chinese with the Chinese, Indian with the Indians, like a leaven which also loses its identity in the dough in order to make the whole rise." *Spirit and Life of the Auxiliaries*

Such a gift of oneself, to be real, must be definitive. The Society does not recall those it has sent out; it has given them for life to a field of apostolate and henceforth the local Bishop directs their activities. Moreover, in sending out missionary teams the Society always gives preference to requests from native bishops, since it is under their direction that the vocation is fully realized.

"The Bishop may employ the Auxiliaries in various services — he may ask them to exercise their profession, so as to make possible the penetration of a given milieu; or else he may entrust to them, according to their competence, the organization of social, medical or educational services or of apostolic institutions." *Spirit and Life of the Auxiliaries*

So far as is possible, the teams are composed of girls of different countries and races in order to avoid any suspicion of political penetration, a frequent affliction in missionary work, and in order to show the catholicity of the Church.

"The Society receives as members young women of all classes and all races, on an equal basis. The one condition is that each one should have decided to rise above all nationalistic or particularistic feelings in order to be only children of one and the same Father, participating in a single life and devoted to a single task — the establishment of His Kingdom." *Spirit and Life of the Auxiliaries*

Thus conceived, the lay missionary vocation is obviously very exacting and requires qualities which cannot be replaced by generosity alone. It should be noted, however, that the aptitudes which can be used vary widely, especially in view of the great diversity of missionary countries.

LAY

Why do the Auxiliaries remain lay?

First, because in the immense field of the apostolate, and especially in mission countries, certain activities are outside the scope of the religious and by their nature require lay apostles.

Secondly, because these girls feel called to live their Christianity in as close contact as possible with the people who must

become their people. The development of Christian leaders in mission countries is necessary for the Church and can be facilitated by the presence of laywomen animated with this ideal.

But especially they remain lay because this is the precise vocation to which they feel called by God.

“Today, as in the time of St. Paul, there is a need to raise up Christian cells in the midst of pagan civilizations, which, little by little, as the leaven in the dough, will penetrate the masses and lead the non-Christians to Baptism. For this reason it is essential that the laity should generously unite their activity and zeal to the apostolate of the clergy.” *Evangelii Praecones*, Pope Pius XII

One might be tempted to think it is simply a dislike for existing forms of religious life which draws young women to join the Auxiliaries. This dislike sometimes exists and might even lead a girl to ask for admission to the Society. But this negative reason is not enough, and it would be better to encourage the girl to overcome her repugnance, for it does not necessarily mean that she has not a religious vocation. An Auxiliary must have a *positive* vocation to the lay apostolate.

The Auxiliaries do not remain lay in order to keep their liberty. This would suppose that they give only a part of their life to missionary work, that they retain the right to change the direction of their lives after a few years, or that they remain free to conduct themselves according to their liking in all but the service of which they have charge. There are in fact, lay people of this type who do place themselves at the service of the missions, either part-time or for a limited period. Other groups of lay missionaries also exist who accept this type of vocation, in addition to others more complete. But the case of the Auxiliaries is different, for they only accept girls wishing to give themselves entirely and for life.

TOTALLY GIVEN

The total gift of an Auxiliary to God is sealed by an oath (taken eventually for life) to the Statutes of the Society and accepted by the President General or her delegate in the presence of the ecclesiastical authority. The obligations following from the oath are stability, zeal, renunciation of marriage, obedience and the spirit of poverty. In their book, *Spirit and Life*, it is said that

“the engagement to complete chastity, an obligation consequent upon the oath taken by the Auxiliary at the end of her training, is an essential part of the total gift of herself to God and to others; she offers to God, not only her services, but her whole being, for the redemption of the world.”

The Auxiliaries accept, therefore, only those girls called by God to this total consecration and who, being aware of such a call, wish to respond to it sincerely and generously.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

The Society provides its members with a spiritual framework, which makes it possible for them to exercise their apostolate in countries where many of the exterior supports of their religion are missing. At the same time the lay character of their apostolate requires great suppleness in their way of life.

The spiritual rule of the Auxiliary comprises daily Mass, a half an hour of meditation each day, a minimum of three hours spiritual reading per week, a daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament, examination of conscience and recitation of the Rosary daily, confession every two weeks, a monthly day of recollection and an annual retreat of one week.

These spiritual exercises are carried out individually because of the varying work schedules of the team members. A weekly spiritual meeting of the team helps them to remain faithful and to develop their spiritual life.

“The Auxiliaries must take special care not to split up their life into one of prayer and one of action — action and contemplation being the two aspects of a single, fundamental reality, loving union with God. Hence, however much the Auxiliaries value the importance of faithful observance of their spiritual rule, they will realize that it is not the sole means of sanctifying their life. Everywhere and in everything the Auxiliaries will find Christ and will live by the reality of this mystery.” *Spirit and Life of the Auxiliaries*

The Auxiliaries in the missions remain under the central authority of the Society for all that concerns fidelity to their vocation. By periodic visits and by correspondence the members of the Central Council do all that is possible to help them. In addition, when a Bishop receives a team, he is requested to appoint a spiritual director for them.

Since the word “lay” tends to convey the idea of individual

liberty, it might be well to give some details of the place of obedience in the life of the Auxiliary. At the time of joining the Society a girl may have personal preferences for a certain country or type of work. She may already have a profession or be engaged in special studies. Although all these things are taken into account, she is always clearly told that she must be ready to accept, in perfect trust and obedience, any decisions which the authorities of the Society think good to make in her regard, renouncing all personal preferences.

Once in the missions, the Auxiliary makes obedience to the Bishop, whatever his orders, the foundation of her apostolate. The working unit being the team, she receives her orders through the team leader, who is responsible for her apostolate as for her spiritual life and to whom she consequently owes the strictest obedience. Nevertheless, authority is exercised in a fraternal fashion, in order not to impede the initiative and sense of personal responsibility indispensable for the lay apostle.

The team of Auxiliaries is not only a working unit, but is also a living unit. Team life is one of the important elements in the life of the Auxiliaries. It not only permits greater collaboration in work and support in difficulties; it is a placing of God's gifts at the common disposal for use in His service.

The word "lay" might also convey the idea of financial independence. The spirit of the Auxiliary is to give to the apostolate, not only herself, but also all that belongs to her. Any earnings from the exercise of her profession (doctor, nurse, teacher, social assistant, etc.), either in the missions or elsewhere, belong to the common purse to supply the needs of the team or of the mission or, in certain cases and with the approval of her Bishop, those of the Training Center.

"An Auxiliary's poverty must not cut her off from the world; her style of life, dress and hospitality must conform to the milieu in which she lives, but not to that from which she personally comes. This poverty must be exemplary, i.e., that of an apostle who shows forth an ideal of Christian life, which attracts, but also may be adopted by anybody prepared to live in a truly Christian spirit." *Spirit and Life*

In view of the demands of such a vocation a serious preparation is obviously required.

TRAINING

Auxiliaries take their training at one of the four Training Centers of the Society located in Chicago, Montreal, Brussels and in the Belgian Congo, Central Africa. The members in training live together, receiving a minimum of three years spiritual and missionary formation before assignment to the missions. They also receive professional or technical training according to their abilities and interests, if they do not already have it when they join the Society. Although only high school graduation is required for admission to the Society, in nearly every case the members are given more advanced technical or intellectual training, usually the equivalent of a college course.

As part of the spiritual and missionary training, courses in Scripture, Liturgy, Apologetics, Dogmatic Theology, Ascetical Theology, Old and New Testament, Missiology, Sociology and Philosophy are given by priests and by Auxiliaries on the staff of the Training Center. Experience in various forms of apostolic work, such as the Legion of Mary and Y.C.W., is also an essential part of training.

The Statutes require a spiritual director for the Society and another for each Training Center. The spiritual directors are primarily responsible for the spiritual formation of the girls and do not participate in the government of the Society or the Center. Every Auxiliary enjoys a great liberty in the choice of her director and the Training Center facilitates this choice by inviting several priests either to give courses or to come regularly for confessions.

The Auxiliaries participate as fully as possible in parish life. At the Training Centers a single weekly Mass for the group is celebrated in their private Chapel. On other days the Auxiliaries go to the parish church.

SPIRITUALITY

The question is often asked: have the Auxiliaries any particular form of spirituality? If by that is meant, whether they follow more especially one or other of the great schools of Christian spirituality, the answer is negative. The answer is yes, however, if one calls it a particular spirituality to have a profound sense of belonging to the Church, Christ's Mystical Body, a piety nourished by Scripture and the Liturgy, a great

loyalty to the Bishop as head of the Christian community, an understanding of the requirements of the catholicity of the Church and a fervent devotion to the Blessed Virgin. But this is rather Christian spirituality without anything special.

Perhaps, however, there is a shade of difference in the manner in which the Auxiliaries live it, a nuance which can be summed up by the triple *mot d'ordre* left to them by Father Lebbe, whose followers they are: Total Renunciation, True Charity and Constant Joy.

(The Auxiliaries Training Center is located at 1103 N. Dearborn, Chicago, Illinois. Further information about the work may be obtained from Miss Violet Nevile, Director, at that address.)

Be Loyal to Your Community

REFLECTIONS FOR ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

THERE ARE AT PRESENT in the Church a large number of religious organizations which share the life of active or apostolic calling, which you have, and the rules and life-plans of which differ very little from your own. What are the deeper reasons, then, which should cause you to have a special affection for your Congregation, to consider membership in it a special grace and to hold it as a sacred duty to sanctify yourself by absorbing its spirit and faithfully obeying its Rule? St. Francis de Sales writes to St. Frances de Chantal: "One ought not to praise and elate one's own Order or Congregation above others, but we should *love* it above all other Orders." What then should cause you to love your spiritual family more than all others and to be resolved, through intimate adherence and loyalty to it, to serve God in it and seek your happiness in it? Prescinding from much that might be said, consider the following three reasons especially.

I. OBEDIENCE TOWARDS GOD

Say to yourself: it is a plain fact that it has pleased the kindly Providence of God to link circumstances in my life so that my attention was drawn to my religious Community, that

I was attracted to it and endeavored to gain admittance to it, while others of my age were by other circumstances led into other religious organizations or other vocations. If it is true in general that absolutely nothing "just happens", that all things result from the wise deliberation and grace-giving will of Providence, this certainly is true in a particular way when the vocation of a person is at stake. Therefore I was certainly led by God's hand into this particular religious family, and I am bound in obedience to God to persevere in it, until He calls me to begin my eternal life.

The circumstances which have led me into this my Community are similar to those which govern my relation to my family at home: to my parents, brothers and sisters, and my home itself. Not my will, but God's Providence placed me in my family circle and thereby obligated me to a special gratitude, reverence and love towards its members. Other families may be more prominent, more lovable, more saintly than my immediate relations, but that does not release me from my obligations, because God wished to place me in this family and none other, and I have duties towards my parents, brothers and sisters that I have towards no other persons. Other districts, cities and houses may be larger and more beautiful, but I must always keep a special interest and a special love for my homeland and my father's house, because Providence chose to have me see the light of day and spend my early years there and nowhere else.

In the same manner I must conduct myself towards the spiritual or religious family to which I belong. That everything is not ideal in this my religious family, is little to the point. Nothing wholly ideal is found on earth anywhere; it will be found only in Paradise. The dear God led me into this my Community, therefore it is good for me to be here, better than anywhere else in the world, and it ought to be my sweetest solace in life and death that I stand, labor and suffer where God wishes me to be and where He will seek me when He summons me to heaven. This is the strongest tie binding me to our Community and this alone is strong enough to keep me attached to it in good days and evil days, as firmly as I am bound in the natural order to my dearest relatives.

II. THE GRATITUDE WHICH THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT DEMANDS

Our Congregation is in truth my spiritual mother, and it is but fair and just that I remind myself often and joyfully of how much I owe to her and what might have become of me if she had not taken care of me. It is a plain fact that she reared me, prepared me intellectually and morally for this glorious vocation, led me into the state of the evangelical counsels; that she relieved me of all care as to my material needs, gave me a beautiful and attractive task, cared for me, body and soul, so well, and continues to do so, that those in the world can but envy me. Perhaps the conditions in my Congregation, the superiors, the other members, teachers, etc., were (or are) not always ideal. Who will deny it? That does not diminish my duty of gratitude! My Congregation is still comparatively young (at least compared with those that are centuries in existence), and the development which God has given it has been so rapid, or it has been occasionally under the influence of external difficulties retarding its progress, so that it was not always possible to have all things as perfect as might have been desired. But she did all that she could do for me and deserves reprimand as little as do my parents, who were perhaps not in a position either to arrange all matters in an ideal way for me.

I shall never be so ungrateful as to forget all these benefits, now that I believe myself able to stand on my own feet. As a child to his mother, so will I give my spiritual religious family one of the first places in my heart. Her rule shall be as sacred for me, her weal and woe touch me as deeply, her progress fill me with as much joy, as was true of St. Francis Xavier, who in his letters displayed a genuinely tender affection and actual devotion to the Society of Jesus, then still a young Order. Thus in return there was given him in generous measure the blessing which is connected with the Fourth Commandment and with it only (Deut. 5:16): "Honor thy father and thy mother, that it may go well with thee on earth." Some religious never achieve quiet and peace in their holy vocation, because they fail to receive this blessing of the Fourth Commandment. They do not honor their spiritual mother, their Congregation, sufficiently; they are not grateful; they are not appreciative of benefactions received from their Congregation, and therefore it does not go

well with them on earth. *Sentire cum Societate* must be my lifelong slogan — to be heart and soul interested in the weal and woe of my religious Community!

III. THE PROSPECT OF BECOMING A SAINT THROUGH INTIMATE
RELATIONSHIP WITH AND THE GUIDANCE OF MY COMMUNITY

To be sure, one can become a saint anywhere in the world, for the decisive factors are present everywhere: God's grace and our good will. But it remains nevertheless true that the achievement of sanctity is made easier by favorable outward circumstances, and such favorable circumstances are offered in a generous measure by living in our Community.

1) It shows me in every detail what I must do to become a saint. This is done partly in the postulancy and novitiate training, to a greater extent in the regulations and provisions of our Rule. There, black on white, are the most exact and complete directions for the acquisition of virtue. In this matter particularly our Constitution received from the Holy See, first an exceptionally laudatory appreciation and, finally, a definitive approbation. What can be accomplished by its conscientious observance is proved by the good example of many of my companions, who in the same circumstances as I are striving after perfection and sanctity and actually seem to be saints.

2) It offers me daily means of grace in such abundance as could scarcely be exceeded; and no one, certainly, can justly complain that there are wanting the means of grace with which to strive for virtue. Think of the daily meditation, holy Mass and Communion, double examination of conscience, the Divine Office or the Little Office, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, spiritual reading, the monthly recollection, the annual retreat, etc. It would be difficult to mention any means of grace which are not at our disposal. There must be added to all this the good spirit animating the vast majority of our companions in all the provinces and missions. Anyone among us who honestly desires to be a saint has the opportunity to reach her goal.

3) A corresponding number of tests of patience, of crosses cannot fail, if one strives to be solidly virtuous. Otherwise it will be a sort of pious theory and empty show. Therefore Providence must provide these too and, if occasionally I am tested rather harshly as to patience, obedience, charity, humility, that

is not an evil, but rather evidence of God's fatherly rearing and grace. For I surely did not enter the convent to escape the cross, but to carry it as a "good soldier" (2 Tim. 2:3) and loyal friend and spouse of Christ, carry it more perfectly and more gladly with Him along the narrow and stony path along which He leads me to eternal life. In contrast to what the majority of people in the world and also in the religious life have to suffer, what divine Providence has allotted me in this regard has been small and is easily borne. It always was suited to my strength, and for this may God be praised forever!

I must sanctify myself in the religious Community to which I belong. Almost all Orders have produced saints in the *early* years of their existence, even if not all of them have been canonized. The stem is still youthful, the life fresh and grace pulses more forcefully. Our religious Community too is still young, measured against the great ancient Orders. I have the duty and also the grace to be a worthy, vigorous, hopeful branch of this our young and sturdy tree, which began life only a few decades (or a century or so) ago and now spreads her thick branches far above many parts of our country or even of the earth. If I have failed in the past, may God in the future give me His grace to better myself thoroughly and be a truly apostolic worker in the spirit of and according to the example of the Divine Master! "God is faithful: by whom you are called unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:9).

May I close this meditation with a little personal remark:

There are four mothers to whom I am devoted with all my heart: *first* of all, our Blessed Mother in heaven, the Mediatrix of all graces. She gave us Christ and all that goes with Him. *Secondly*, holy Mother Church, the depository and dispenser of all graces merited for us by Christ in His Life, Passion and Death. *Thirdly*, my own earthly mother (God rest her soul!). I am deeply indebted to her for rearing me the way she did, all the while encouraging me to pursue my holy vocation. *Fourthly*, my Society, the religious Community which has adopted me, unworthy one, has given me my religious and clerical education, and with her safeguarding Rule and Constitutions and daily routine and work assigned to me, is giving me material and spiritual *security* beyond expectation for time and for eternity.

REV. BRUNO HAGSPIEL, S.V.D.

The Convent Book Shelf

RELIGIO RELIGIOSI. The Object and Scope of the Religious Life. By Aidan Cardinal Gasquet, O.S.B. Grail Publication, St. Meinrad, Indiana. 120 pages, cloth \$2.50.

First published in 1916, and again in 1923, the present book by the great English Cardinal is proving itself one of undying merit. In the preface he tells the origin of the book and his purpose in writing. Its pages "explain the faith that is in me and state why I am a religious and why I have found peace and happiness in following that mode of life which St. Benedict calls the *Via Vitae* — the path of life. Of course this little volume makes no pretence whatever of being a treatise on the religious life. It simply sets down the reasons which led me just fifty years ago to seek salvation through the helps afforded by the monastic life, and what those helps have been. It is a memorial of gratitude to God..." (p. viii-ix). These humble words will not lessen the basic and lasting value of the book for all religious. We welcome the reprint.

THE INDEX TO THE NEW TESTAMENT, and THE TOPICAL ANALYSIS TO THE NEW TESTAMENT. By Aloysius H. Seubert. Universal Publications, P.O. Box 201, San Diego 10, California. 122 and 142 pages, cloth \$5.00 (special prices for quantities).

There are actually two works bound into one, as the title indicates. Each of the titles (books) performs a separate function. *The Index to the New Testament* gives an analysis, in alphabetical order, of key words and ideas occurring in the New Testament. Since this is not a concordance, but an idea index, it fits any text or edition of the Bible (N.T.). "The purpose of the Index is to give to the layman a device by which he can quickly find those religious topics which arise during discussions, those topics which he knows are in the

Bible, but lacking an index, he cannot find." The second part, the topical analysis, lists the books of the New Testament in alphabetical order and breaks down the chapters thereof into a kind of outline of contents. This part will not be as useful as the first part, *The Index*; in fact, it is the bulk of the book and one wonders what the real purpose of it is. The general usefulness of *The Index* is evident for school, home and church. Preachers and teachers especially will welcome it. The typography is good, and the use of bold face effective; but it is hard to see why almost every word is capitalized. Tools like this are best when they are most simple. The standardization of punctuation for chapter and verse becomes more and more a necessity in our country.

A.L.B.

A BOOK OF SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTION (*Institutio Spiritualis*). By Abbot Ludovicus Blosius. Translated from the Latin by Bertrand A. Wilberforce, O.P., Edited by a Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey. (Orchard Books Series) Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. Cloth, 143 pages \$2.75.

The writer of this sixteenth century classic is the well known Abbot Blosius (Francois Louis de Blois), also called "the Venerable" and "Doctor of the Presence of God". His life span is 1506 to 1566, during which time he distinguished himself as a Benedictine reformer of the abbey of Liessies and, even more, as a spiritual writer. His one concern is the welfare of souls and union with God in intimate love. His writing bases itself on the doctrine of the divine adoption and the Presence of the Blessed Trinity in the soul by grace. A man of deep and constant prayer and self-denial

and spiritual reading, he combines gentle discretion with the strong faith and detachment of a reformer. Like St. Benedict he kept death daily before his eyes. Abbot Blossius belongs to the school called "*devotio moderna*". The editor's fine preface to the book helps one to understand all about this and more concerning the author and his spiritual trends. Our present volume is only one of the works of the author. It was first published in 1551 and again after his death in 1566, after which it went through a series of printings and editions, until its English translation appeared in 1900. We are grateful to the Nuns of Stanbrook and to the Newman Company for the present publication of this title by a master of the spiritual life.

SPIRITUALITY FOR: POSTULATE, NOVITIATE, SCHOLASTICATE. By Rev. James F. McElhone, C.S.C. Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana. 196 pages, cloth \$3.00.

Here is a volume treating of spiritual subjects for beginners who are naturally concerned with the fundamentals. The author "undertook the work of writing a text for a particular group of these neophytes, those who are preparing for the religious life of poverty, chastity and obedience. He deals with the problems they encounter, the virtues they should strive to acquire, the goals within their reach." No subject receives exhaustive treatment, since it serves to make a transition from the life of a layman to that of the religious during the early years of formation.

INDULGENCES. By Rev. Winfrid Herbst, S.D.S. Bruce Publishing Co., 400 North Broadway, Milwaukee 1, Wisconsin. 103 pages, paper \$1.50.

The contributing writer to Sponsa Regis has done all religious another signal service in writing this book, a practical and complete handbook

about indulgences. The volume addresses itself to all Catholics and uses plain, understandable language. A wealth of doctrine and information on indulgences now becomes accessible to everyone. It is not a collection of actual indulgenced prayers (though a few occur by way of example), but an explanation of the meaning, worth, conditions, method of gaining indulgences. All sorts of questions and problems receive adequate treatment. One feels sure that every point which concerns the non-theologian is explained. It would be well, if Sisters used such a manual for a course of instruction on indulgences, whether in the convent or in the schools. Nowhere is there more doctrine and practice packed into a slim volume on the subject than in this one by Father Winfrid Herbst.

SAY IT WITH STORIES. A Compilation of True Stories, Anecdotes and Examples for the Use of Preachers, Teachers, Public Speakers and Lecturers. By Father Cyprian Truss, O.F.M.Cap. Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., 53 Park Place, New York 7, N.Y. (Herder, London). 189 pages, cloth \$3.95.

The subtitle makes the contents of the book clear. Anyone can read this straightforward collection of stories, recommended in the Foreword by the Bishop of Providence with the words, "Ofttimes I have wished for a ready compendium to assist me in finding the exact illustration of a truth or practical application of a lesson. . . With truly Franciscan humility he (the author) wishes to share through these pages his rich experiences." The stories, short and unadorned, are arranged topically.

BROTHER NICHOLAS. A Life of St. Nicholas of Flüe. By G. R. Lamb. Sheed and Ward 840 Broadway, New York 3, N.Y. 191 pages, cloth \$2.50.

The subject of this life is the celebrated national hero of Switzerland of the fifteenth century, who was the father of ten children, later became a hermit and led a life of great austerity and devotion. He is

regarded as a patron of Switzerland. "It is the merit of the present biographer that he reduces the complex historical network, the extremes of the active and passive life, the interaction of the worldly and the saintly on one another, to the central theme of sanctity..."

LEAVEN OF HOLINESS. By Rev. Charles Hugo Doyle. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. 1956. 242 pages, cloth \$3.50.

After Fr. Doyle had written his previous book for religious, *In Pursuit of Perfection*, a deluge of mail poured upon him requesting that he continue his series of conferences. I did not consult my *Thesaurus* for another term comparable to deluge, but I predict this present work will inundate him again.

Leaven of Holiness is one of those infrequent, refreshing, challenging, prodding, delightful spiritual books. It deals with the eternal verities, but dressed in the new look. The reader finds herself forced to take another look. What religious has not labored with her particular examination? Here she will find not only exterior and interior defects exposed (and such common ones as might be overlooked: giddiness, mimicry, mockery, pouting, etc.), but also remedial directives to shed them.

"Difficulties are good teachers." The topic, "Anticipating Trouble," will be enlightening and beneficial to most religious. We all dread change, and, as Fr. Doyle says, "Every community has its Siberia." This will forestall any false and unwarranted opinions of self.

Some may think the author whimsical at times. He has spiced each topic with some very apt anecdotes and witticisms (a particularly good one when dealing with mortifications) which often contain a barb.

The book would lend itself to public spiritual reading. F.A.W.

GOD'S COLOR BOOK (New Color Book Series). Grail Publications, St. Meinrad, Indiana. Large size, price 35 cents.

THE NUN. By Margaret Trouncer. Sheed and Ward, 840 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 1955. 297 pages, cloth \$3.50.

In this enjoyable book Margaret Trouncer gives a very good picture of village life in seventeenth-century France, as well as a complete and interesting account of the life of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, one of the greatest ornaments of the Visitation Order, through whom Christ gave to His Church the special devotion to His Sacred Heart. Her own kith and kin and the members of her religious community contributed the sufferings and persecutions that helped to mold her not merely into an apostle of love and suffering, but into a great saint made specifically for carrying the Cross of Christ. S.A.

PSYCHIATRY FOR PRIESTS. (American Edition) By Herman Dobbelstein, M.D. Translated from the German by Meyrich Booth, Ph.D. P. J. Kenedy & Sons, New York City. 1955. 156 pp., cloth \$3.00.

This brief work on psychiatry written by a German psychiatrist was translated and amended for American usage. It is more on the order of a handbook where one can find convenient references to mental disorders. All who are in charge of souls should have a basic knowledge of human digressions and abnormalities of conduct. This book sets out to accomplish that.

"The neurotic is one who wishes to escape the responsibilities of life and takes a 'flight into illness'. He must be shown the unconscious basis of his trouble and its relationship

to his illness." The author then sets forth a definition of the psychotic person: "A genuine psychosis is the expression of some serious mental disorder, such as schizophrenia or mania." A great portion of the book is devoted to description and explanation of cases suffering from schizophrenia and manic depressive psychosis. The last part deals with mental disorders of an organic nature: epileptic diseases, drug addiction, feeble mindedness, etc.

The average person can readily be deceived by persons who may portray some symptom of a mental illness. A display of spiritual zeal may actually be a symptom of one such disorder. A study of this book will help priests and religious superiors to make the proper evaluation, and thus be of great help to the psychiatrist to obtain cooperation on the part of the patient. Teachers could derive tremendous benefit also from this study. Children frequently display some of the symptoms of illness and, if detected in the early stages, they can be directed to a normal life. F.A.W.

A NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY. By Ronald Knox. Volume II. The Acts of the Apostles. St. Paul's Letters to the Churches. Sheed & Ward, New York. 1954. Cloth, \$3.75.

This book continues the work Monsignor Knox began in 1953 with his *Commentary on the Gospels*. It is concerned with the Acts of the Apostles and St. Paul's Letters to the Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians. The author intended his commentary to be read with the *Ronald Knox New Testament*, but it can profitably be used with any version of the text.

The comments are not exhaustive, for they treat only of passages whose meaning is disputed, or which would be obscure or unintelligible for the ordinary reader. To these Monsignor Knox brings the full force of his biblical wisdom and his penetrating erudition, thereby offering very real assistance to the ordinary reader of these sacred texts. A.B.M.

THE PATHS TO THE HEIGHTS. By Raoul Plus, S.J. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. 128 pages, \$2.50.

Father Plus uses the metaphor of mountain climbing to give an explanation of the spiritual life which is at once easy to understand and very challenging. He shows that we do not need much equipment to reach the peaks of Thabor and Calvary. This book is written especially as a challenge to the young, who are "vigorous in body, stout of heart and virile in soul." First we must scale the lofty heights of faith, no longer satisfied with skin-deep Christianity. We must see, love and dare, be drunk with responsibility. There must be isolation and discipline, devotion to the idea of sacrifice. The first training ground is the round of daily duties where we learn to control ourselves and our environment. We must train ourselves for a hard life which excludes creature comforts. The need of silent prayer is stressed in some of the finest passages of the book. The Blessed Virgin and the Holy Eucharist provide for the ascent. No mountain climber sets out for the heights without a guide; we too need a spiritual guide if we wish to reach the heights. As mountain climbers are roped together, so we must unite forces with others who have

the same aims that we have. We must sing as we climb, not only retaining joy but also radiating it.

This book should be studied by all teachers who are serious in their desire to train spiritual mountain climbers. If they accept the challenge which the book offers, they will transmit it in turn to their charges and together they will take "the path to the heights". S.R.

SYMBOLS OF CHRIST. The Old Testament and the New Testament. By Rev. Damasus Winzen, O.S.B. Drawings by William V. Cladek. P. J. Kenedy and Sons. New York, N.Y. 1955. 104 pages, \$2.50.

Abbot Vonier, in speaking of our guardian angels, says that it is always a gain to our faith, if we succeed in finding the true doctrinal and theological meaning of the symbols that were the food of our childish minds. Father Damasus, a well known biblical scholar, has done his readers a real service in giving a strictly scriptural interpretation to the symbols that represent Christ in the Old and New Testaments and in showing how they interweave, harmonize and unify the two Testaments. He has, furthermore, studied the Christian and cosmic origins of these symbols.

The artist, William V. Cladek, by giving visual expression to these symbols gives the book added value. Anyone who is interested in symbols because of their liturgical or artistic connotation will find this book invaluable for ready reference as well as for further study. S.R.

THE MOTHER, THE HEART OF THE HOME. Edited by Rev. Edgar J. Schmiedler, O.S.B. Grail Publications, St. Meinrad, Indiana. Pp. 216. \$2.00.

This book is a collection of conferences given at the twenty-second annual convention of the National Catholic Conference on Family Life in New Orleans, March 24-26, 1954. The importance of the role of the mother in every family is clearly explained in this book. Mary, the Mother of God, is spoken of as the model of all mothers and the center of all Catholic homes. When Mary is duly honored in the home, there is also true happiness and harmony between parents and children.

Dr. John J. Kane points out in chapter sixteen the indispensable position and the significant role of the father in a wholesome and happy family. Maybe not many American people are aware of this fact, that the importance of a father's influence is much lessened in many American homes. This is a serious fact. Dr. Kane's observation is very objective and enlightening. His opinion is a good guide for many American fathers in the realization of their rights and duties in the home.

This book is a valuable contribution to those who are interested to know the best views of experts and Catholic leaders on family life.

S.B.

AS THE EAGLE. The Spiritual Writings of Mother Butler, R.S.H.M., Foundress of Marymount. By a Carmelite Pilgrim. P. J. Kenedy and Sons, New York, N.Y. 1954. \$3.50.

The author presents a study of a series of letters written by Mother Butler to her Sisters during her generalate. With rare insight and understanding he shows that her letters furnish consistent and complete guidance for the spiritual life. The principles which Mother Butler lays down for her Sisters are so general in their application that any religious will find this book helpful,

instructive and encouraging. It would make excellent spiritual reading for religious, especially during the monthly day of recollection or during the days of retreat. S.R.

THE FORMATION OF A LAY APOSTLE. By Rev. Francis N. Wendell O.P. Order from: The Third Order of St. Dominic, 141 East 65th Street, N. Y. 21, N. Y. Paper 50 cents, cloth \$1.25.

The second edition of this little volume has been completely revised to afford concrete direction for today's lay apostles, whether teenagers or mature adults. Both will find practical, workable direction for the development of the spiritual life and the avoidance of the "heresy of works".

In addition to specific suggestion for an active and effective lay apostolate, Father Wendell has appended a current bibliography of books, periodicals, pamphlets, and pertinent Papal Encyclicals and addresses. M.H.

ODILIA. By Reverend Bernard Mischke, O.S.C. North Central Publishing Company, Saint Paul, Minnesota. 1955. 163 pages, cloth \$2.00. Order from: Crozier Fathers, Onamia, Minnesota.

Odilia, one of the eleven virgins martyred at Cologne sometime around the year 304, lived in pre-Augustine, pre-Boniface Europe. With little more than tradition, an imaginative story is constructed in an historical background. However, many minds reject as artificial any story spun with threads of fancy to clothe a saint. At times the style tends to be sentimental with the use of such phrases as: "bade goodbye", "radiant locks", "silent tears glistening in the lamp light".

More true and more authentic are the last thirty pages telling of the activities of Odilia after her birth into eternity. Almost a thousand years after her death, Brother Jean Novelan through dreams was directed to the finding of her burial place. To him Saint Odilia said, "God has commanded me to be the protectress

of the Brethern of the Holy Cross". In compliance with her request, the relics of the saint were brought from Cologne to the Crosier monastery of Huy in the Valley of Clairlieu.

For us in the Middle West, it would be of interest to know more about the National Shrine of Saint Odilia located at the Crosier Monastery at Onamia, Minnesota. S.M.

TRUE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT. By Rev. Edward J. Sutfin. Grail Publication, St. Meinrad, Indiana. \$3.00.

One can hardly read this book without acquiring an irresistible urge to try some or all of the suggestions in it and so give to others a true Christmas spirit. Any parent or teacher who would carry out the ideas could do much to bring the children under her care closer to the spirit of the Christmas cycle. Reverend Edward J. Sutfin, the author, includes with each feast suggestions to suit every phase of a child's make-up, each idea stemming from the liturgy.

Surely the liturgy has more meaning to the child who helps make the Advent wreath in his home, who participates in the blessing of the Christmas tree, who sets up the crib containing figures he helped make, who sees his house blessed and the figures 19CMB56 written over the doorway with blessed chalk. The last day of the Christmas cycle, the feast of the Purification, will be filled with meaning for him, if he learns the reason for the procession and the symbolism of the candle he himself has dipped.

The how and the why of each of these activities and many more are well written up in this book. For a more meaningful Christmas cycle read **True Christmas Spirit.** S.J.

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